



# ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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## Quality Counts national education ranking puts Kentucky in Top 10

Kentucky's ranking in an annual assessment of all states on key education indicators rose four places, making it 10th in the nation for its efforts to improve teaching, raise student achievement and many other variables related to public education. Gov. Steve Beshear joined Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and other education advocates to celebrate.

Each year, *Education Week* (a national publication focusing on P-12 education) produces a special issue, "Quality Counts." The report tracks key education indicators and grades states on policy efforts and outcomes. Last year, Kentucky ranked 14th nationally. In 2010, the state was in 34th place in this report.

"Kentucky is emerging as a leader in education," Holliday said. "2009's Senate Bill 1 mapped the course with rigorous academic standards aligned to the demands of college and career; assessment and accountability that drives improvement; and a focus on educator training and effectiveness that results in greater student achievement and readiness. We would not have come so far, so fast, without the support of Gov. Beshear, legislators, business and community members, and the hard work of teachers, administrators, parents and students and staff."

Quality Counts provides data and information about states' efforts in six areas:

- K-12 Achievement
- Standards, Assessments and Accountability
- Teaching Profession
- School Finance
- Transitions and Alignment
- Chance for Success (an index that combines information from 13 indicators that cover state residents' lives from cradle to career)

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## Commissioner Holliday finishes quest to visit all of Kentucky's 174 school districts

Education Commissioner Terry Holliday has made good on his promise to visit all 174 school districts in Kentucky. He completed his mission recently with visits to the Green and Hart County school districts.

"It's been terrific," said Holliday. "Our teachers, principals, superintendents and other staff are doing a great job educating our students in spite of budget cuts, new standards and assessments, and higher expectations. If the people of the state could see what I've seen, they would be impressed with the dedication and professionalism of our educators."

Holliday said most educators he talked with agree that the Kentucky General Assembly had the right vision when it passed Senate Bill 1 (2009) mandating reform. Educators' biggest concern is that there were not adequate resources to support implementation.

"They've done an amazing job in meeting the challenges before them. All their hard work is paying off," Holliday said. "The state is not only seeing progress in student achievement but also in the college and career-readiness of our students and the number of students who graduate."

Holliday's journeys took him to more than 400 schools across the state and he admits that his global positioning system didn't always know the way.

"I've gotten to know some of the more rural areas of Kentucky pretty well," he joked.

In addition to meeting with teachers and administrators, Holliday has served school lunches, helped teach classes and, on more than one occasion, had a chance to return to his roots as a music teacher and lead the school band.



With the visit to the Hart County school district, Education Commissioner Terry Holliday, right, seen here at Hart County High School, reached his goal of visiting all of Kentucky's 174 public school districts. Photo by Amy Wallot, KDE

"I was impressed with the students I met," Holliday said. "Based on that, and the job our educators are doing, Kentucky's future is bright."

Holliday made the commitment to visit every school district in the state shortly after he was named commissioner in 2009. In fact, he felt it was so important, he asked the Kentucky Board of Education to include it as one of the goals on his performance evaluation.

"Terry is committed to improve K-12 public education for every student in every school district in Kentucky," said Kentucky Board of Education chair David Karem.

"I applaud the commissioner for taking the time to make these visits and for listening to Kentucky's educators and students. It is important that their experiences inform the work we do as a board and at the Kentucky Department of Education," he said.

Holliday said even though the challenge is over, there is much work that remains to be done, and he will continue visiting schools throughout the state on a regular basis.

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States were assigned overall letter grades based on the average of scores for the six categories. This year, Kentucky's overall grade was a B-minus, an improvement over last year's grade and a higher grade than the national average, which was a C-plus.

No states received a grade of A in the 2013 edition of *Quality Counts*. The highest-ranking state was Maryland, with a B-plus. Three states received B grades; eight states (including Kentucky) received B-minus grades; and 19 states received C-plus grades.



*Quality Counts* also provides detailed scoring for each major area, and on a 100-point scale, Kentucky scored at 90 or above in five areas: School Accountability (Standards, Assessment and Accountability); Building and Supporting Capacity (Teaching Profession); Early Childhood Education; College Readiness; and Economy and Workforce (Transitions and Alignment). Kentucky received a perfect score in School Accountability and Economy and Workforce. The state's lowest score was in Spending (School Finance), in which Kentucky's total was 53.4 points.

This is the 17th edition of the annual *Quality Counts* report, and the theme this year is the impact of a school's social and disciplinary environment on students' ability to learn and on the teacher and administrators tasked with guiding them.

The full report is available at <http://www.edweek.org/>.

	KENTUCKY			NATION			KENTUCKY'S RANK NATIONWIDE		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
<b>Overall Score</b>	C	C+	B-	C	C	C+	34	14	10
<b>K-12 Achievement</b>	C-	C-	C-	D+	C-	C-	19	13	13
<b>Standards, Assessments and Accountability</b>	*n/a	A-	A-	*n/a	B	B	*n/a	20	20
<b>Teaching Profession</b>	*n/a	B-	B-	*n/a	C	C	*n/a	5	5
<b>School Finance</b>	C-	C-	C-	C	C	C	35	35	34
<b>Transitions and Alignment</b>	B-	B-	A	C+	C+	B-	14	14	4
<b>Chance for Success</b>	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	38	36	38

## Prichard Committee receives Pew grant

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence will work to strengthen Kentucky's home visiting program for at-risk new families under a \$125,000 grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The committee created its Strong Start Kentucky: Quality Preschool for Every Child campaign in 2007 and has raised awareness statewide, particularly among state policymakers, about the value of investing in high-quality preschool.

The effort will focus on expanding home visiting in Kentucky and ensuring it gives priority to evidence-based programs, sets clear standards for child and family outcomes, and monitors programs for effectiveness.

Kentucky's home visiting program, known as HANDS (Health Access Nurturing Development Services), serves more than 10,000 families each year in all 120 counties. Statistics from the program show that participants have lower rates of premature births, infant mortality, developmental delays and emergency room use, and fewer substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect.

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## Next-Generation Science Standards available for review

The second draft of the Next-Generation Science Standards (NGSS) is now available for public review. The NGSS may be accessed at [www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards](http://www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards).

The second draft of the standards resulted from tens of thousands of comments submitted during the first public review in May 2011 and subsequent state review. This draft also includes guidelines for how NGSS aligns to college and career readiness goals.

KDE encourages educators, parents, lawmakers, business people, scientists, engineers and all others interested in science education to review the second draft of the standards and submit their comments online. The public review period continues through Jan. 29 and is an important opportunity for Kentucky residents to provide input on the standards that will guide how our nation's students will learn science for years to come.

It has been more than 15 years since the previous set of science standards was developed. Additional information about the framework and the NGSS is available from <http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/sci/pages/next-generation-science-standards.aspx>

## Kentuckians may volunteer for annual 'Shop and Share' day on Feb. 2

First Lady Jane Beshear is encouraging Kentuckians to volunteer and participate in the 5th Annual "Shop and Share" day, a one-day goods drive to benefit domestic violence shelters across the state. The drive will be held at Kroger and Food City stores Feb. 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Volunteers at each Kroger and Food City store will provide a list of items needed at the shelters, such as canned foods, school supplies, toilet paper and soap. Monetary donations also will be accepted. To sign-up as a volunteer, visit <https://secure.kentucky.gov/FormServices/FirstLady/ShopandShare>.

Last year, the combined goods and monetary donations for Shop and Share day were estimated at more than \$782,000.

All collected contributions will be given to the 15 Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (KDVA) shelters across the state. For more information on Shop and Share, please visit <http://firstlady.ky.gov/Pages/shopshare.aspx>.